

Lifelong Learning

What about it?



Lifelong learning is defined as learning that continues throughout a person's lifetime. The learning that takes place can range from the most highly formal and structured activities to the most informal modes of learning. Lifelong learning can be provided in a variety of learning styles and approaches. It can be either "taught" or "non-taught" learning.

Taught Learning refers to courses taken. It includes courses taken using packaged materials provided by an employer or other training provider.

Non-taught refers to learning that is self-directed, a concept that has recently gained a great deal of attention and use. Also included in this category is supervised on-the-job training.

Lifelong Learning and Your Future

Why Lifelong Learning?

Motivation for learning in the first place is primarily job or employment related. In the future, companies will seek knowledgeable workers who take responsibility for their own professional development. Lifelong learning will become a must for workers of the future. Effective lifelong learning is a key element to being successful. Most of us wish to learn things to help us improve ourselves, but we don't always use the most effective methods to do so.



Why and How to Participate in Lifelong Learning Getting Started

Step 1. Establish A Personal Plan

- Set career milestones and review them yearly.
- Decide which skills are the most important for advancement and focus on what it is you need to learn them.
- Write your goals down and prioritize your learning--having written goals will help you focus.
- Identify learning opportunities.
- Seek out good learning situations--these need not be formal classroom settings.
- Make a commitment to lifelong learning. Don't make the mistake of relying just on employers for training--there's a lot you can learn on your own.

What To Do?

Have you ever wondered how people discover what jobs and career fields they want to pursue? How can you find out what careers might be right for you?

Finding a job in a career field you will find satisfying is a process of exploration and discovery. The following are steps that many people satisfied in their jobs follow in that process.

- ✦ Discover your interests. What do you like to do? What don't you like to do? What kind of job environment do you want?
- ✦ Identify those skills you want to learn or strengthen. If you want to be a doctor, how can you strengthen that chemistry grade?

- ✦ Assess what kind of life you want. How much money will you need to support your standard of living? What careers will provide that level of income?
- ✦ Explore career fields while still in high school. Prepare for the kinds of training and education you will need after high school in order to succeed in your chosen career field.
- ✦ Apply to appropriate schools or training programs during your junior and/or senior year of high school.

If you prepare and plan, you will gather the skills and credentials needed to succeed in your chosen career field.

Source: Adapted from *Directions*, a publication by Indiana Career and Postsecondary Advancement Center

- Keep your technical skills updated and constantly develop your interpersonal skills.

Step 2. Self-Assessment

A *self-assessment* is a way to enhance self-understanding. It is being able to describe your unique characteristics and abilities clearly and accurately regarding:

- What you do well (skills)
- What is important to you (values)
- What you like to do (interests)



Reviewing and analyzing your past and present experiences will increase self-understanding. Increasing your knowledge of your skills, values, and interest will help determine what you should focus on learning.

Self-assessment tools are available from several places. Your school will likely have them available. Check with your guidance office/career advisor. Your local NH Employment Security Office has a Resource Center with many free tools for your benefit. There are thirteen offices throughout the state--call your nearest office or stop in (*See location address information on page 3*).

Here's a few questions to ask yourself to start your self-assessment. Analyze your skills at work, on a committee, or as part of an organization. Do you do these things *Always, Frequently, Occasionally, Seldom, or Never*?

1. Do I take steps to keep my technical skills updated?
2. Am I familiar with the technology tools of the "office of the future?"
3. Do I possess the skills or ability to lead (form teams and encourage participation from members)?
4. Am I a problem solver (can I identify "roadblocks" that impede the work flow and come up with a solution)?
5. Do I utilize strong organizational skills (such as time management)?
6. Do I possess the qualities of a professional (display diplomacy, courtesy and honesty in various situations)?
7. Am I flexible and innovative (being open to new approaches, even if I believe my way is best)?
8. Do I offer new ideas?
9. Do I possess persuasion and negotiation skills (can I negotiate or persuade others when necessary)?

- If most of your answers are *Always* or *Frequently*, you have confidence in your skills. Embrace the concept of lifelong learning by keeping pace with new trends in your field.
- If most of your answers are *Seldom* or *Never*, you may have doubts about your skills. Take a proactive approach and explore learning options.
- If your answers are a little of everything, you may be uncertain about your skill level. Try taking exploratory classes or attending some workshops to determine the knowledge you are lacking.



Determine what it would take to improve your skills: do some research, join user groups, attend professional seminars, or read articles by experts in your career or industry.